

[REDACTED]
West Milford, NJ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

January 9, 2014

NHTSA
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

JAN 24 2014

I am enclosing a copy of a letter to Volkswagen Customer Care that details a problem, nearly identical to NHTSA Action Number: PE07018. This letter explains what happened recently with my 2002 Volkswagen Passat as well as the insufficient and incomplete remediation previously performed by Volkswagen as a part of their Recall Campaign in 2008. Please note in the letter that the problem was not only with water entering the brake booster that caused brake failure as described in PE07018, but also with water freezing within the brake booster.

In the next few days, I will file a formal complaint through your website detailing the problem as reflected in the enclosed letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

West Milford, NJ

January 9, 2014

VW Customer Care
3800 Hamlin Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

I am writing this letter because I am seeking reimbursement for service work recently performed on my 2002 Volkswagen Passat 1.8 T (vin#WVWVD63B12E). This work should have been unnecessary if the P912 Campaign (As part of the P9 Recall Campaign) had been properly completed. The following paragraphs detail the problems leading up to this work.

In August of 2013, while driving out of my driveway, I experienced a total loss of braking. After examining the car, I discovered that the plenum that holds the battery and brake booster was filled most of the way with rain water. It was necessary for me to remove one of the "duck billed" drain plugs that was clogged with debris before water could drain out. Unfortunately, the flooded plenum resulted in water being drawn through the vacuum lines when attempting to brake. This, in turn, resulted in a significant amount of water to be drawn into the crankcase. Water was also drawn into the cylinders resulting in misfiring. After removing at least one drain plug in the plenum for proper drainage, double flushing the contaminated oil in the crankcase, and replacing all four ignition coils, I experienced no further braking problems until freezing weather in November 2013. In November, while braking near the bottom of a hill, I again experienced a "hard pedal" with no depression and almost no braking ability, resulting in the car going into the intersection before fully stopping. The car was towed to Crestmont Volkswagen in Pompton Plains, NJ for repair. (See invoice #571649) As noted in the invoice, "Customer states that all brake vacuum assist is lost while driving intermittently." However, this concern was not addressed because two weeks later, there was again the symptom of a "hard pedal" with no depression and near loss of all braking. The car was again returned to Crestmont Volkswagen for repair. This time, the vacuum booster, the vacuum pipes, and their related items were replaced. (See invoice # 572368) As noted in the invoice, evidence of water was found in the replaced vacuum booster. Crestmont also acknowledged that the plenum had a significant high-water pollen line, indicating flooding of the plenum. It was believed by their service department staff that the brake failures in November and December 2013 were likely the result of residual water freezing in the vacuum booster, causing the booster to be inoperative. (See service notation on Invoice # 572368)

In March of 2008, this car was sent to Crestmont Volkswagen for the "P9" Recall Campaign. (See Invoice # 409627) Imbedded in that campaign was a tech service (Campaign P912) where allegedly the following was done: "Clean and modify air plenum drain ... and install improved pollen filter." Now, looking at the 2008 P912 Campaign, it is clear to me that Volkswagen was well aware of flooding problems in the plenum and was aware of the potential for water entering the vacuum booster and its related vacuum pipes. Further, Service Bulletin #237901 acknowledges this problem. Whatever actions that

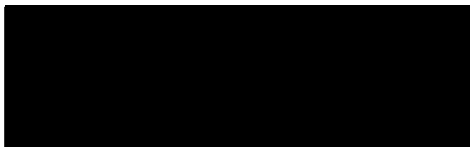
were or were not undertaken by Crestmont Volkswagen in the 2008 Campaign (P912) to remediate the flooding issue, they were totally insufficient and resulted in future problems detailed in the above paragraph. It should also be noted that Crestmont Volkswagen and Volkswagen of America failed to make me aware of the seriousness of the problem and, furthermore, I was not provided information, orally or written, for future maintenance of the plenum.

Volkswagen of America, knowing there was a problem with water flooding the plenum, which could result in total failure of the vacuum booster if water was drawn up into it, must take responsibility. I am therefore seeking full reimbursement from Volkswagen of America for the repair of the brake failure outlined in this letter. This would include the full amount in invoice #572368 (\$1,216.96) as well as the double flushing of the crankcase (8 qts synthetic oil + 2 oil filters) and the replacement of the ignition coils in August. (The total amount is detailed at end of this letter.) While I am not at this time seeking reimbursement for the same brake related problems repaired under Invoice #571649, it is regrettable that the brake booster failure was not correctly addressed during that service, resulting in an unsafe car being released to me.

In the coming days, I will explore filing a complaint with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) which will detail the failure of this braking system, particularly noting that the failure of the vacuum booster with its water/ice in it could have resulted in death or injury.

I look forward to your timely response and an amicable resolution to this serious matter.

Sincerely,



CC: NHTSA/ E.S. Department of Transportation
Customer Service, Volkswagen AG, Wolfsburg, Germany

Claims for Reimbursement

Brake booster, vacuum pipes, related items plus labor plus 7% NJ tax:	\$1,216.96
Two (2) VW brand oil filters @ \$9.99 each + NJ tax:	21.38
Eight (8) qts. 0-40 Mobil Synthetic @ 8.99/qt + NJ tax	76.95
Four (4) ignition coils (set of 4 Audi/VW - Bremi) + NJ tax	<u>108.84</u>
Total:	\$1,424.13

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